

POTENTIAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN MIGRATION AND IMMIGRANTS' FOOD CONSUMPTION HABITS. THE CASE OF ROMANIAN IMMIGRANTS IN ANDALUSIA, SPAIN

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Abstract

The paper aims to identify potential connections between migration and food consumption habits of Romanian immigrants in Andalusia, Spain and to study a series of factors that may contribute to the establishment of these connections. The analysis was based on a series of information obtained through a field research carried out between January and June 2011 among the Romanian immigrants in Andalusia (306 respondents). The analysis' results revealed the fact that after migration, the Romanian immigrants who took part in the study felt a series of changes in their food consumption habits, mainly resulting in consuming a higher proportion of the food products specific to the host country, compared to the food products specific to their country of origin. The analysed factors that may influence the relationship between migration and food consumption habits were encountered in the specific scientific literature, namely the length of residence and immigrants' age. The analysis revealed the fact that among different groups of respondents by length of residence and age, there are statistically significant differences in what concerns their perception regarding the changes in their food consumption habits after migration. The length of residence is positively correlated with the changes in food consumption after migration, while age is negatively correlated.

Keywords: migration, immigrant, consumer, consumption, food products, consumption habits, consumer behaviour, Romania, Spain

JEL Classification: E21, F22, O15

Introduction

A person's behaviour is the expression of the values specific to its culture, values developed in time through the contribution of the values and culture specific to the society it belongs to, and also of those specific to its family or different groups it belongs to. The consumption behaviour specific to an individual can be identified as part of the culture of a nation when it is adopted by various individuals (Luna and Gupta, 2001).

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Levitt (1983) cited in Rout and Senapati (2008, p. 173) argued that there are “no truly isolated cultures”. Since ancient times, humans - who are mainly consumers and play a key role in the market (Petrescu, Dinu, Ștefănescu and Dobrescu, 2010) - searched different economic, social, etc. opportunities in other areas than the original ones; in recent years, the migration process has reached great amplitude, being also emphasized by the tourism sector. Thus, when individuals belonging to one culture intersect with others belonging to another culture, various changes at personal, social and consumption levels occur. As a result of the increased mobility of individuals, they become exposed to “the products, lifestyles and behaviour patterns of consumers belonging to another area” (Douglas and Craig, 1997, p. 380). However, from another perspective, individuals that move to other areas carry different values and types of behaviour with them, exposed to individuals originating in the area. The increasing migration phenomenon leads to a special complexity on the markets, at global level. The more immigrants are exposed to the host culture, the more they embrace its specific norms, values, behaviours, etc. (Luna and Gupta, 2001), Douglas and Craig (1997) - cited by previously mentioned authors - considering that migration represents “one of the forces that are causing radical changes in consumer behaviour”. At the same time, immigrants not only adapt to the new culture, but they also contribute to its change.

According to Hamlett, Bailey, Alexander and Shaw (2008, p. 92), “immigrants’ consumption behaviour represents a poorly researched phenomenon, despite the fact that the ethnic factor is considered as a category of identity with a strong influence on consumption decisions”. However, in what concerns acculturation and consumption, Sutton-Brady, Davis and Jung (2010) consider that there are various studies on this topic on groups of immigrants from different areas. Even if, according to Douglas and Craig (1997), most studies are focused on groups of immigrants in North America, especially Mexican, Chinese or Korean, considerable efforts are being made in Europe as well, in order to enrich studies on this subject. For example, studies concerning migration in Britain outlined the “importance of food consumption in immigrants’ relationship with host culture” (Desai, 1963 cited in Hamlett, Bailey, Alexander and Shaw, 2008, p. 97), “food consumption being considered a key factor in the process of consumer acculturation” (Rosenthal and Feldman, 1992; Penaloza, 1994; Omar et al., 2004 cited in Hamlett, Bailey, Alexander and Shaw, 2008, p. 97).

This paper aims to identify the potential relationships between migration and food consumption habits of Romanian immigrants in Andalusia, Spain and to study a series of factors that may contribute to the establishment of these relationships. In this sense, the paper is structured into three main parts. The first part briefly puts forward a series of aspects related to the migration phenomenon in Spain - in general - and in Andalusia - in particular -, focusing on the Romanian immigrants, while the second part briefly presents the main results of a study (Navas Luque and Rojas Tejada, 2010) regarding the acculturation of the Romanian immigrants in Andalusia. The third part of the paper is based on a series of information obtained through a research carried out among the Romanian immigrants in Andalusia during January-June 2011 and it submits an analysis regarding the potential connections between migration and food consumption habits of immigrants, focusing on the variables that may represent key factors in establishing the connections. The paper ends up with a series of final considerations.

1. Aspects regarding the migration phenomenon in Spain and Andalusia - focus on Romanian immigrants

Throughout history, and especially during the last century, migration in Spain had a prominent role in the general evolution of population and its geographical distribution, influencing the demographic, economic, cultural, and political behaviours in different ways. Although migration flows have notably increased over the last century, it can be assessed that during this period, the migration phenomenon experienced significant changes both in its dynamics and evolution, and in terms of its features. If during the first seven-eight decades of the 20th century, the migration phenomenon was marked by emigration outwards and to industrialized areas of Spain, during the last decades of the century, the migration phenomenon has seen significant changes, with an increase in the variety of directions of migration flows, with a drastic reduction of migration outside Spain and a substantial increase of migration from outside, expressed both through the return of Spanish migrants, as well as through the migration of foreigners into Spain (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2003). The latter is currently one of the main features of Spanish demography and society. The speed with which Spain has gone from a supplier to a receiver of immigrants doesn't have a precedent in the European demographical history. While in the northern European countries, like France or England, this process occurred over several decades (between 1950 and 1970), for Spain the panorama has changed dramatically in less than five years. Spain is the EU country that has experienced the highest continuous growth of immigrants since 1997, receiving in 2006 about 45% of all immigrants in the European Union (Gallardo San Salvador and Gomez de Enterría, 2009). Therefore, it can be assessed that Spain has gone from a country of emigrants to a country that receives and integrates immigrants, recognizing the benefits of their integration both economically and socio-culturally. In this sense, a practice can be represented by the "Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration 2007-2010" ("Plan estratégico de ciudadanía e integración 2007-2010") which, based on principles of equality, citizenship, interculturalism, dialogue and mutual accommodation, highlights the importance of integrating immigrants and focuses on a comprehensive approach to citizenship and equality (Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, 2007).

Andalusia, the most populated autonomous community in Spain, fits the previously described frame associated with the migration phenomenon perfectly. Thus, according to Navas Luque and Rojas Tejada (2010), over recent years, Andalusia, an autonomous community with a strong emigration character in most of the last century, quickly turned into a powerful receiver of important external migration flows. For example, if in 2000 the foreign population represented 1.76% of the total population of Andalusia, in 2010 their share rose to 8.41% (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2011a). Therefore, in accordance with the manifestation of the migration phenomenon in Spain, it can be assessed that Andalusia went from a provider to a receiving autonomous community of immigrants, that focuses on the integration of immigrants considered a generating factor of economic prosperity. A practice in this sense can be represented by "The 2nd Integral Plan for Immigration in Andalusia 2006-2009" ("II Plan Integral para la Inmigración en Andalucía 2006-2009") which highlights the importance of promoting social, personal and work integration of immigrants, considered persons with rights and obligations specific to the Andalusian society, thus ensuring the access of immigrants to mutual basic public services (such as health care, education, social services, legal assistance, etc.) on equal terms (Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Gobernación, 2007).

An integral component of international migration, emigration represents an extremely important socioeconomic phenomenon for Romania; according to Ghetau (2008), during the communist regime (before 1990), international migration in Romania consisted of a single component, namely emigration. The economic, social and political environments in Romania determined and still determine more and more persons to migrate in search of economic and social opportunities outside the national borders. In recent years, Spain and Italy represent the most important receiving countries of temporary emigration from Romania (OECD 2006, 2008a, 2008b; Constantin, Nicolescu and Goschin, 2008). Also, reviewing the statistics provided by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2011b), it can be assessed that Romania, along with Morocco, is a leading provider of immigrants for Spain, implicitly for Andalusia. Reviewing the official data from the administrative registers (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2011a) which show a stock of the Spanish municipalities' inhabitants, it can be observed that in 2010, 831,235 Romanians were registered as living in Spain, representing 14.46% of the total foreign population in Spain and 1.76% of the total population of Spain. In Andalusia, according to the official data from the administrative registers, in 2010, Romanians occupied - at very short distance - the third position among foreigners residing in Andalusia, after the United Kingdom and Morocco; their number was of 93,169, respectively 13.23% of the total foreign population in Andalusia and 1.11% of the total population of Andalusia. Also, Romanians are one of the very recent groups who have chosen Spain as a country of destination, but have experienced a spectacular growth in recent years. A brief analysis of the evolution of Romanians registered in Spain during 2006-2010 supports the previous statement. Thus, if in 2006, 407,159 Romanians were registered in Spain, in 2010 their number increased more than twice. The same situation is found also in Andalusia, where the number of registered Romanians in 2006 - of 41,053 - increased more than twice in 2010. Some of the factors that led to these increases can be represented by the bilateral agreements between Romania and Spain for the regulation and organization of labour movement between the two countries, and Romania's accession to the European Union.

2. The acculturation of the Romanian immigrants in Andalusia - results of previous studies

Jamal and Chapman (2000, p. 365) consider that in order "to explain the consumption experiences of the consumers that come from ethnic minorities, researchers often resort to terms such as "acculturation" and "ethnicity" ". "Ethnicity refers to the total of ethnic features specific to a nation, to a culture" (Academia Romana, Institutul de Lingvistica "Iorgu Iordan", 1998), while acculturation involves the learning and adoption of the specific norms and values of a culture by a person coming from a different culture (Cleveland, Laroche, Pons and Kastoun, 2009). Acculturation involves changes in behavioural patterns of immigrants, patterns that may be part of the language area, clothing area, food area, etc. For example, acculturation involves changes in consumption patterns, causing changes in the quantities or types of purchased goods (Wallendorf and Reilly, 1983).

According to Cleveland, Laroche, Pons and Kastoun (2009), over time, researchers have modelled a complex process of acculturation based on both the assimilation of the new culture (the majority, host) and the preservation and promotion of the culture of origin

(minority), the specific scientific literature outlining four patterns of acculturation (Berry, 1980 cited by the authors mentioned above):

- *Integration* is manifested by the minority individuals (immigrants) who adopt the new culture, and at the same time, cultivate their culture of origin.
- *Separation* is adopted by the minority individuals (immigrants) who strongly keep their culture of origin, and reject the norms and behaviours specific to the host culture.
- *Assimilation* is represented by the gradual renunciation of the culture of origin in favour of entirely adopting the host culture.
- *Marginalization (exclusion)* occurs when the minority individuals (immigrants) lose the cultural or psychological contact both with the society of origin and the host society.

In what concerns the process of acculturation of the Romanian immigrants in Andalusia, Navas Luque and Rojas Tejada (2010) carried out a study that aimed to apply the Expanded Model of Relative Acculturation on the Romanian and Ecuadorian immigrants in Andalusia. The study was based on the participation of 600 Spaniards, 277 Ecuadorian immigrants, and 298 Romanian immigrants. In the applied model, eight environments in which the level of acculturation was assessed, can be distinguished, respectively: the political environment, social welfare, work, economic (which, among other issues, includes a series of aspects related to consumption behaviour), social, family, religious, and values environments. The acculturation strategies implemented by the immigrant groups and perceived by the Spaniards and the attitudes and strategies preferred by the studied groups, were analysed focusing on the four patterns of acculturation, respectively assimilation, integration, separation and exclusion.

The study revealed that the Spaniards perceive an overall strategy of "separation" in the case of the Romanian immigrants, respectively the Spaniards believe that the Romanian immigrants keep the habits specific to their country of origin, without embracing the ones specific to the Spanish society. Regarding the general attitude of acculturation desired by the Spaniards to be adopted by the Romanian immigrants, this is situated between "assimilation" and "integration". This means that the Spaniards would like the Romanian immigrants to adopt the behaviours and habits specific to the Spanish society to a greater extent, but at the same time to keep the customs and behaviours specific to their country of origin, in a small extent. An in depth analysis of the acculturation process regarding the eight environments mentioned above, reveals the fact that the Spaniards perceive an acculturation strategy of "assimilation" in the work environment, of "integration" in the social environment, and of "separation" in the family and religious environments, for the Romanian immigrants. In the rest of the environments, the perceived strategies lay between "assimilation" and "integration" in the economic environment, and between "integration" and "separation" in the values environment. But, in terms of acculturation attitudes desired to be adopted by the Romanian immigrants, the Spaniards appreciate an attitude of "assimilation" in the political, social welfare, work and economic environments, and an attitude of "integration" in the family and values environments. In the case of the social environment, an attitude between "assimilation" and "integration" is desired, while in the case of the religious environment, an attitude between "integration" and "separation" is desired (Navas Luque and Rojas Tejada, 2010).

The Romanian immigrants who took part in the study considered that they implement an overall strategy of acculturation between “separation” and “integration”, which means that they keep the customs and behaviours specific to their country of origin, but at the same time, they adopt the habits and behaviours specific to the Spanish society, in a small extent. Regarding the desired general attitude of acculturation, this is one of “integration”, which indicates that the Romanian immigrants in Andalusia would like to keep the habits and behaviours specific to their country of origin, but also to adopt the ones specific to the host country. An in depth analysis of the acculturation process regarding the eight environments mentioned above, reveals the fact that the Romanian immigrants implement a strategy of “integration” in the social and economic environments, of “separation” in the family, religious and values environments, and one between “assimilation” and “integration” in the work environment. In terms of desired acculturation attitudes, if they could choose, the Romanian immigrants would implement a strategy of “integration” in the economic, social and work environments, of “separation” in more central environments such as religious and family, of “integration-separation” in the values environment, of “assimilation-integration” in the social welfare environment, and of “assimilation” in the political environment (Navas Luque and Rojas Tejada, 2010).

3. Migration and food consumption habits of Romanians in Spain – potential connections

Generally, food consumption habits are “stable and predictable but, at the same time, paradoxically, are in a continuous change” (Fieldhouse, 1995 cited in Cleveland, Laroche, Pons and Kastoun, 2009, p. 198), Rout and Senapati (2008) revealing that, with migration, food consumption behaviour changes drastically. Starting with the previous statement, this part of the paper aims to analyze the potential relationships between migration and food consumption habits of the Romanian immigrants in Andalusia, with an emphasis on the variables that could represent key factors in establishing these relationships.

The analysis is based on a series of information obtained through a field research carried out during January-June 2011 on Romanian immigrants in Andalusia, the autonomous community which is among the first five communities preferred by the Romanians who emigrate to Spain, along with Community of Madrid (Comunidad de Madrid), Valencian Community (Comunitat Valenciana), Catalonia (Cataluna) and Castile-La Mancha (Castilla-La Mancha). The survey was based on a questionnaire – structured into four parts - carried out among the Romanian immigrants in Andalusia (306 respondents), the present paper being based on a series of information obtained from the first three parts. The first part includes general information about the respondent (age, gender, marital status, etc.), the second includes information associated with the migration process, the third includes information associated with food consumption habits, and the fourth includes information on the entrepreneurial intentions of respondents.

Regarding the sample’s structure according to gender, it can be assessed that it is balanced (table no. 1). In what concerns age, a substantial presence of respondents aged between 26 and 45 is remarkable. This is not a surprising aspect because generally - related to migration - the 26-40 age category is of particular interest to the labour market and it also represents a category of already formed persons with high innovation and work potentials and extremely flexible (Constantin et al., 2004 cited in Petrescu, Bac and Zgura, 2011).

Table no. 1: Sample's structure by respondents' gender and age

	Gender		Age (years)						
	Female	Male	under 16	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	over 65
abs.	163	143	8	56	104	82	37	16	3
%	53.3	46.7	2.6	18.3	34.0	26.8	12.1	5.2	1.0

Note: abs. – absolute value

In order to identify potential relationships between migration and food consumption habits, in the questionnaire respondents were asked to express on a 7 levels Likert scale their degree of agreement in connection with a statement regarding the changes in their food consumption habits since they moved to Spain, changes shown mainly through prevalent consumption of food products specific to the host country, compared to food products specific to their country of origin. A descriptive analysis of the obtained results (table no. 2) reveals that the majority of respondents (155, respectively 50.7%) totally agreed with the fact that migration has led to some changes in their food consumption habits. This aspect may be - to some extent - in line with the strategy of "integration" (which implies that immigrants adopt the customs of the host society, but at the same time, they keep a part of the customs specific to their country of origin) adopted in the economic environment (which, among other issues, includes a series of aspects related to consumption behaviour) by the Romanian immigrants in Andalusia (Navas Luque and Rojas Tejada, 2010).

Table no. 2: Respondents' degree of agreement related to the changes in their food consumption habits after migration

Type of agreement	The perceived degree	Frequency	%
Total disagreement	0	9	2.9
Moderate agreement	1	11	3.6
	2	8	2.6
	3	24	7.8
	4	45	14.7
	5	54	17.6
Total agreement	6	155	50.7
Total		306	100.0

In order to identify a series of factors that might contribute to the establishment of relationships between migration and food consumption habits - in this case changes in food consumption habits after migration, primarily resulted in prevalent consumption of food products specific to the host country, compared to food products specific to their country of origin - after reviewing the specific scientific literature, various variables were introduced in the questionnaire.

- *The length of residence in the host country*

Regarding the correlation between the length of residence in the host country and the changes in food consumption habits, following a survey, Mehta and Belk (1991, p. 407) found that "the Indian immigrants who have been living in the United States for a longer period of time tended to adopt the American cuisine to a greater degree". Also, Bermudez et al. (2000) cited in Verbeke and Lopez (2005, p. 827) demonstrated that "the length of residence in the host country influences dietary patterns, and that this is positively correlated with the adaptation to dietary patterns specific to the host country". The last part

of the previous statement is strengthened by the results of the study carried out by the previously cited authors (Verbeke and Lopez, 2005), which refer to the fact that the length of residence in the host country is positively correlated with the frequency of consumption of mainstream food specific to the host country.

Thus, after reviewing the specific scientific literature and the statistical literature (Anghelache, 2004), the first set of hypothesis of the analysis presented in this paper was established:

H0a: The variation of the dependent variable is independent of the factor, respectively the means are equal – the factor is insignificant.

H1a: The variation of the dependent variable is dependent of the factor, respectively the means are not equal – the factor is significant.

Where:

dependent variable - respondents' perception regarding the changes in their food consumption habits after migration;

factor - length of residence in the host country.

In order to test the first set of hypotheses, the means corresponding to each category of respondents were compared, and an ANOVA analysis was implemented. Considering the results shown in table no. 3, it can be assessed that H0a is rejected, which means that there are statistically significant differences between different groups of respondents taking into consideration the length of residence, in terms of their perception on the changes in their food consumption habits after migration. Thus, it can be assessed that the Romanian immigrants who took part in the survey and have been living in Andalusia for a longer period of time, perceive the changes in their food consumption habits more - primarily resulting in prevalent consumption of food products specific to the host country, compared to food products specific to their country of origin - compared with those who have been living for a shorter period of time.

Table no. 3: Respondents' perception regarding the changes in their food consumption habits after migration, depending on the length of residence

Length of residence (years)	0-1	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	over 11
Average score	3.17	4.15	5.05	5.31	5.43	5.37	5.56
F	13.226						
Sig.	0.000(*)						

Note: (*) Significance level of 0.01.

Also, in order to identify the correlation between the changes in food consumption habits after migration and the length of residence, between the two variables, the Spearman correlation coefficient was implemented. For a significance level of 0.01, the correlation is significant (sig.=0.000), and the correlation coefficient is 0.430, leading to the idea that there is a positive relationship between the two variables. Therefore, it can be assessed that the length of residence is positively correlated with the changes in food consumption habits after migration.

• *Immigrants' age*

Regarding the correlation between the immigrants' age and the changes in food consumption, following a survey, Mehta and Belk (1991, p. 407) found that, generally, the children of the Indian immigrants who live in the United States are "enthusiastic about American foods". On the same note, Jamal (1998, p. 224), following a qualitative study on food consumption habits of British-Pakistanis, considers that food products specific to the host country are perceived by "the young generation as convenient, and as a way to conform to the mainstream culture". As a conclusion of the above statements, it can be assessed that young immigrants are much more flexible and adaptable to the new culture, while older immigrants have authenticity in food consumption (Sutton-Brady, Davis and Jung, 2010).

Thus, after reviewing the specific scientific literature and the statistical literature (Anghelache, 2004), the second set of hypothesis of the analysis was established:

H0b: The variation of the dependent variable is independent of the factor, respectively the means are equal – the factor is insignificant.

H1b: The variation of the dependent variable is dependent of the factor, respectively the means are not equal – the factor is significant.

Where:

dependent variable - respondents' perception regarding the changes in their food consumption habits after migration;

factor - respondents' age (immigrants' age).

In order to test the hypotheses, the means corresponding to each category of respondents were compared, and an ANOVA analysis was implemented. Considering the results shown in table no. 4, it can be assessed that H0b is rejected, which means that there are statistically significant differences between different groups of respondents taking into consideration the age, in terms of their perception on the changes in their food consumption habits after migration. Thus, it can be assessed that the younger Romanian immigrants who took part in the survey perceive the changes in their food consumption habits more - primarily resulting in prevalent consumption of food products specific to the host country than food products specific to their country of origin - compared with older Romanian immigrants.

Table no. 4: Respondents' perception regarding the changes in their food consumption habits after migration, depending on their age

Age (years)	under 16	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	over 65
Average score	4.88	4.96	5.16	4.94	4.16	3.44	3.67
F	4.669						
Sig.	0.000(*)						

Note: (*) Significance level of 0.01.

Also, in order to identify the correlation between the changes in food consumption habits after migration and age, the Spearman correlation coefficient was implemented. For a significance level of 0.01, the correlation is significant (sig.=0.002), and the correlation coefficient is -0.178, which leads to the idea that there is a negative correlation between the two variables.

Given the fact that according to Verbeke and Lopez (2005, p. 826), “socio-demographic characteristics, expressed in many ways, are very important determinants of the consumption of foods”, the potential correlations or the differences between the means - among the responses to the statement about changes in food consumption habits after migration and a series of factors like gender, marital status, educational level, or working status - were tested. However, in the case of the Romanian immigrants in Andalusia, the results obtained after processing did not reveal the existence of any relationships - at least not linear - between the variables, and neither of any statistically significant differences between the means.

Conclusions

The results obtained from the analysis presented in this paper have revealed that migration has influenced the food consumption habits of the Romanian immigrants in Andalusia. Respectively, after migration, the Romanian immigrants in Andalusia who took part in the survey felt a series of changes in their food consumption habits, primarily resulting in prevalent consumption of food products specific to the host country, compared to food products specific to their country of origin.

Among the factors that could influence the relationship between migration and food consumption habits, the length of residence in the host country and the immigrants' age were analysed in the paper. The analysis revealed that there are statistically significant differences between different groups of respondents taking into consideration the length of residence in the host country and the age, in terms of their perception on the changes in their food consumption habits after migration. The length of residence is positively correlated with the changes in food consumption habits after migration - changes primarily resulting in prevalent consumption of food products specific to the host country, compared to food products specific to their country of origin - while age is negatively correlated. Therefore, it can be assessed that the younger Romanian immigrants perceived stronger changes in their food consumption habits after migration, compared with the older immigrants. Also, the longer Romanian immigrants reside in Andalusia, the more they see changes in their food consumption habits - compared to immigrants with a shorter residence.

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